

January 22, 1981

SITUATION REPORT

POLAND

Negotiations between the government and a 10-man Solidarity delegation on the issue of work-free Saturdays ended inconclusively yesterday, indicating that "warning" strikes slated to be held in at least four provinces today will go ahead as planned. [REDACTED]

The purposes of the four-hour strikes have been broadened to include demands for the release of political prisoners and an end to repression. The renewal of these demands reflects a growing inclination on the part of many in Solidarity's leadership to call the regime to account for slow implementation of its promises. Solidarity's National Commission has asked for a meeting with the government within two weeks to review progress on the fulfillment of the agreements made last fall. [REDACTED]

Soviet Propaganda Chief's Visit

Moscow probably used the visit to Poland of its propaganda chief Leonid Zamyatin from 13 to 20 January to impress on the Polish leadership the need for a

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stricter media line toward Solidarity and the dissidents and for firm opposition to calls for relaxation of censorship.

The Soviets may be encouraged by the fact that over the past six weeks the Poles have tightened censorship of the media. Several Polish journalists have attributed this effort to the regime's attempt to reduce Soviet nervousness. They see Politburo member Olszowski, who took charge of propaganda and ideology in December, as the author of this policy.

Debate on Censorship

Moscow probably is less encouraged about the debate over revision of the censorship laws that emerged from the regime's promise last August to ease censorship. A commission from the Ministry of Justice and another representing journalists have been working on draft bills but have not been able to reach an agreement.

The most controversial points include the journalists' demands that censors be subordinated to the parliament, that censors' decisions be subject to appeal, and that certain publications be outside the censorship system. Even if enacted in part, such changes would significantly alter the system.

As on so many current issues, the party is now caught between its promises to institute reforms and the unwillingness of some powerful segments of the regime as well as the Soviets to see such changes made. It has to decide whether to stall for time or to allow debate in the parliament.

The party can no longer count on parliament to give automatic approval to any proposal. The party leadership is aware that the loss of control of censorship in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was one of the factors that led to the Soviet invasion.

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To stall, however, risks alienating journalists and writers who support reform. It probably would also provoke a strong reaction from Solidarity. The new unions do not want any censorship of their internal newsletter and probably would not tolerate strict censorship of the weekly newspaper they intend to begin publishing soon.

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